

## Call for Participation

### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, HEALTH & WELLBEING RESEARCH SEMINAR

A seminar exploring how ideas of environmental justice can inform and advance research and action on the linkages between environment, human health and wellbeing.

**7 April 2011**

**UEA London,  
102 Middlesex St, London E1,  
United Kingdom**

Applications are invited for participation in this 1-day research seminar in London. The call is open to researchers at all stages in their career, and also to non-researchers with an interest in research on this theme. However, places at the seminar will be limited to approximately 25 participants, of which 12 will be asked to provide short (15-minute) presentations.

Further details of the seminar theme and programme are attached.

***To Apply:***

Please send a 100-200 word statement of interest in the seminar theme, or a 200 word abstract if requesting to provide a presentation, to:

[ehdnet@uea.ac.uk](mailto:ehdnet@uea.ac.uk)

The deadline for applications is **7<sup>th</sup> March** and successful applicants will be notified by mid-March.

There is no registration fee.

UK travel expenses will be reimbursed for presenters only.  
Accommodation will not be funded.

Overseas participants are welcome, but, regrettably, we can only reimburse expenses for transport within the UK - for confirmed presenters.

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, HEALTH & WELLBEING RESEARCH SEMINAR

The seminar is jointly convened by the Global Environmental Justice research group at University of East Anglia and the Environment, Health and Development Network, and supported by the Disaster and Development Centre at Northumbria University and the Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability Centre at Sussex University.

## Seminar Context

Given the recent growth in interest in justice within wider theoretical, moral and political debate, it is timely now to re-examine the implications of contemporary thinking for environment and health research three decades or so after the first waves of environmental justice activism and following more recent challenges over its theoretical depth.

Environmental justice addresses both the distribution of environmental harms and benefits (goods and services), and people's participation in decision-making, including recognition of people's particular identities and visions of a desirable life. These concerns are often expressed as aspects of distributive justice and procedural justice. The basic premise motivating environmental justice research is that injustices drive environmental degradation and profoundly influence its differential impacts on people. It is centrally concerned with the capacities of different social actors to resist impacts and with the constraints on individual and collective action. Recent debates also surround the related concept of health justice, with health posited as a foundation for human agency, and a view of justice based on capabilities to achieve good health (and avoid disease risk from environmental hazards). It is important, in this sense, not to address health in a narrow, biomedical sense but to embrace wider concepts of human wellbeing (e.g. emotional, spiritual dimensions), and their fundamental linkages with poverty, participation and sustainability.

The seminar will take a global perspective, and attention will focus strongly on addressing the continuing need for research and debate on environment, health and wellbeing issues in developing countries, where the effects of environmental injustice tend to be thrown into sharpest relief. However, the underlying processes of environmental injustice are truly global (and increasingly globalized) and we will also examine how justice concepts can frame environment and wellbeing concerns in the UK and other higher-income countries.

## Seminar programme and format

The seminar will draw on research across a range of topics relating to environment, health and wellbeing (e.g. water pollution and supply, sanitation and waste water, agricultural practices, natural hazards and disasters, nutrition and food security, climate and disease, air pollution, urban informal housing, energy use, toxic/nuclear waste). However, the sessions will not be organized on the basis of discrete topics but on broader themes such as change and transformation. The programme will be designed to allow room for discussion within each session, and there will be an extended discussion forum in the final session.

09.30-10.00 Registration

### 10.00-11.15 **Session 1**

This introductory session will explore what justice means and how it is being articulated. Research presentations will be chosen to inform questions such as: *how can a justice perspective inform research on distributive inequities in exposure and sensitivity to health risks?; how do social power*

*dimensions play out in relation to environment and health, in local and international terms?; what are the roles of discourse, governance and conflict in limiting or extending procedural justice in relation to wellbeing concerns?*

### 11.30-12.30 **Session 2: Dynamics**

The second session will examine environmental justice in the context of change: of environmental change, development processes, globalization and dynamics of vulnerability. Such changes are themselves re-shaping the inter-linkages between health and environment at varying scales in all regions, often with major implications for the wellbeing of the poor or marginalized. Presentations might cover questions such as: *how do societal transitions and development processes reflect, deflect or reinforce health injustices?; what are the implications of globalization for issues of international environmental justice?; do the potential shifts in disease burdens associated with climate change have implications for distributive justice?*

12.30-13.30 buffet lunch

### 13.30-14.50 **Session 3: Transformation**

The third session will be concerned with pathways toward addressing environmental health injustice. It builds on the previous two, turning the understanding of environmental justice-wellbeing linkages toward consideration of 'action'. It will examine social, technological and governance aspects of transition, with a focus particularly on procedural justice and the role of social movement, and will focus explicitly on the research process in bringing justice issues to the fore, e.g.: *how can we match international effort more closely to global disease burdens?; what is the role of the researcher in constructing narratives of risk?; what processes of working with communities can support their transformative capacity?*

### 15.15-17.45 **Session 4**

The fourth session will commence with two final research presentations and then provide an extended forum in which to bring the ideas together from the preceding sessions, drawing out policy and research agenda implications. Three additional areas in which we would seek to advance discussion would be working through: *what are the departure points between justice and equity?; how are procedural justice and distributive justice interlinked in practice and in effects?; how do environmental change and health/wellbeing injustices play out at various scales, and what are the interconnections across scales?*

### **Evening event**

It is planned that the daytime seminar will be followed by a public debate on the same theme, held in the UEA London lecture theatre. This will part of a series of open events organized by the Global Environmental Justice group at UEA London. This is likely to take the form of a panel discussion, with brief presentations from academics and representatives of non-academic organizations, followed by open discussions. The idea is that this event will draw on the outputs from the daytime seminar, and it is hoped that many of the seminar participants will also join the evening event. Drinks and nibbles will be offered.

Public debate: 18.30-20.00